

FLIGHT JACKET

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June 3, 2005

Ceremony salutes America's heroes

Story by Petty Officer 3rd Class John R. Guardiano

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — America's top military leaders — the commander in chief, secretary of defense, and chairman of the joint chiefs of staff — commemorated this Memorial Day by paying tribute to the tradition of wartime military service that has distinguished generations of Americans, past and present.

"The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines we remember today answered the call of service in their nation's hour of need," President Bush said Monday in a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, Va. "They stood to fight for America's highest ideals. ... All stood to protect America. ... Their courage and



President George W. Bush (left) places his hand over his heart as Army Maj. Gen. Galen Jackman (right), commander, Military District of Washington, salutes during a Memorial Ceremony May 30 at Arlington National Cemetery, Monday. Photo by Air Force Tech Sgt. Cherie A. Thurlby

sacrifice will never be forgotten by our nation."

Bush noted that this year marks the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. Some 400,000 Americans, he observed, died in that conflict. "America will always honor the character and the achievements of your brave generation," he said.

Today, in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, "another generation is fighting a new war against an enemy that threatens the peace and stability of the

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Jensen takes helm of Expeditionary Strike Group 3

Story by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Brigadier Gen. Carl B. Jensen took command of Expeditionary Strike Group Three from Brig. Gen. Joseph V. Medina Wednesday in a ceremony aboard the USS Peleliu. Jensen is the commander of Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area and commanding general, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Medina commanded ESG-3 and directed its forces during deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is scheduled to assume command of Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler. Upon taking command, Jensen said he was, "so proud to be the steward of this Navy-Marine Corps team

... joining the finest group of Americans." He continued with a message for the Sailors and Marines under his command, "this is where the rubber meets the road, I look forward to sailing freedom's vanguard with you soon." The strike group provides commanders a readily available, tailorable, forward-postured and immediately employable force, capable of projecting power from the sea beyond the littorals.

Jensen was commissioned in the Marine Corps in 1975 after graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree from Northern Illinois University.

Throughout his career, he has held a variety of command and staff billets, to include squadron and group command and assignment to the Joint Staff at the Pentagon.



Brigadier Gen. Joseph V. Medina (left) congratulates Brig. Gen. Carl B. Jensen (right) upon his taking command of Expeditionary Strike Group Three Wednesday in a ceremony aboard the USS Peleliu. Behind the general officers and presiding over the ceremony is Vice Adm. Barry M. Costello, commander, Third Fleet. Photo by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

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Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



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DoD: Child care assistance extended into communities

Department of Defense Press Release

WASHINGTON — America's military families have traditionally faced a laundry list of child care concerns, from the need to locate care multiple times because of relocation, to increasing child care expenses that outpace income levels.

A new Department of Defense initiative officially launched May 17 in partnership with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies will step in to help military families find and pay for child care directly in their communities.

Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood provides financial support and assistance in locating quality childcare for eligible military families who do not have access to the DoD's on-base child care options due to wait listing or geographic location.

The largest employer-supported child care program in the nation, the DoD child care program serves more than 200,000 children daily and has been hailed as a model of child care quality.

Unfortunately, a growing number of military families do not live close enough to a military installation to take advantage of the program.

"The demand for the high quality child care that servicemembers experience with the DoD's on-base child development programs has never been higher," said Janice Witte, director of the Pentagon's Office of Children and Youth. "The Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood program will greatly extend our ability to serve the military families who don't have access to our on-base services."

MCCIYN is a sister-program to the recently launched Operation: Military Child Care program. Both locate and subsidize

child care comparable to what a servicemember would receive on a military installation. OMCC is specifically focused on providing relief to the families of those serving in the Global War on Terror, including National Guard and Reserves.

"Finding and paying for quality child care is a major concern for nearly every family with young children in America," said Linda Smith, executive director of NACCRRA. "In some areas of the country, infant care can cost more than \$13,000 per year. Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood not only supports the military's geographically-dispersed families, but also elevates the quality of care available in communities by certifying participating providers to meet the DoD's high standards of child care."

The MCCIYN initiative will be administered by a network of NACCRRA member agencies that will walk families through the process of locating a qualified care provider. Once approved, NACCRRA will provide financial support directly to the provider on behalf of DoD, so that service members' fees can be reduced.

The amount of financial assistance will vary for each family and will depend upon factors such as total family income, geographical location, military services' childcare fee policies, available funding, as well as certain family circumstances.

Eligible families can call the Child Care Awareness hotline at 1-800-424-2246 or visit <http://www.naccrra.org> for help with applying for the subsidy and location assistance.



Is this your Trans Am?

The above vehicle has been marked for impound by the Provost Marshal's Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lots. Abandoned vehicles at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar present security risks as well as environmental and safety concerns. PMO attempts to identify and contact vehicle owners of illegally parked, abandoned vehicles prior to tagging the vehicle with a Department of Defense notice. Vehicles are then scheduled for towing three days following the notice. For more information, please call 577-1276 or 577-4150

Help prevent fraud, waste, abuse

Story by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

According to a United States Marine Corps press release dated Aug. 26, 2003, Northrup Grumman was ordered to pay the Department of Defense \$60 million for fraudulently charging the government for independent research and development of double-hulled ships.

This amount is very drastic and, if occurring more than one time every decade, would cost the government hundreds of millions of dollars.

Imagine if that same amount were stretched throughout the entire Marine Corps. This downward spiral of mismanagement would be far more damaging than one \$60 million case of fraud.

That is why the DoD has a hotline and several phone numbers for servicemembers to contact fraud waste and abuse personnel.

According to Lt. Col. Douglas H. Biggs, inspector, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, there are several steps Marines, Sailors and civilians at the air station can take to help prevent cases of fraud, waste and abuse from happening.

"Accountability – knowing what assets you have on hand and knowing where they are, continually conduct vul-

nerability assessments and if you become aware or suspect that fraud, waste or abuse is occurring, report it to the base inspector's office or the DoD hotline, ASAP," Biggs said. "The caller is not required to disclose his or her identity, however, revealing one's identity may facilitate the investigation in the event that follow-up inquires become necessary."

Biggs added that when fraud, waste or abuse is suspected, an investigation determines if there is actually a case.

"Depending on the severity and the nature of the complaint, the case may be closed following a preliminary inquiry or could lead to a formal investigation," Biggs, a St. Louis, Mo., native said. "Regardless, any information submitted in good faith will be reviewed, even if the information and or resultant investigation does not lead to an actual case of fraud, waste or abuse."

For more information or to report a case of fraud, waste or abuse at the air station, call (858) 577-1245, or write to: Commanding General (Attn. Inspector), P.O. Box 452001, San Diego, Calif., 92145-2001.

MIRAMARKS

"What can each Marine do to prevent fraud, waste and abuse at the small-unit level?"

LANCE CPL. JUAN RAYAVACA

Armorer
H&HS

"Each section should have one person who does all the purchasing and inventories all the assets."



CPL. JESSE VANDERPOOL

Assistant Barracks Manager
MAL5-11

"More emphasis should be put on using a tracking system, and the sections should make sure the person using the system is trustworthy."



FLIGHT JACKET

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MAJ. GEN. KEITH J. STALDER
Commanding General
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



BRIG. GEN. CARL B. JENSEN
Commander MCABWA
Commanding General
MCAS Miramar

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U.S. Mint strikes first military commemorative silver dollar

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Mint at Philadelphia celebrated National Military Appreciation Month May 25 with the ceremonial strike of a new commemorative coin — the 2005 Marine Corps 230th Anniversary Silver Dollar.

Current and former Marines cheered as Director Henrietta Holsman Fore and other dignitaries struck the coins in the Proof Room where the silver dollar will be produced. The official launch of the Marine Corps 230th Anniversary Silver Dollar will be at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., July 20, U.S. Mint officials said.

This is the first time the United States has honored a branch of the military with a commemorative coin, according to information provided by the Mint. Surcharges from the sale of the 2005 Marine Corps 230th Anniver-

sary Silver Dollars will be paid to the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation to help construct the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico.

The obverse, or “heads” side, design of the coin features the raising of the American flag at Iwo Jima from the famous photograph by Joe Rosenthal during World War II. On the reverse, “tails” side, is the Marine Corps eagle, globe and anchor emblem and motto, “Semper Fidelis” - Latin for “always faithful.”

“The coin design is simple and heroic,” Fore commented at the ceremony. “The Iwo Jima image is the storied symbol of Marine Corps heroism, courage, strength and versatility. It exemplifies ‘Semper Fidelis’ to an appreciative nation every day around the world.”

“We are honored to be the first military service to receive a commemorative coin issued by the United States

Mint. We are particularly pleased that proceeds from this coin will help build the Marine Corps National Museum in Quantico,” said Marine Corps Assistant Commandant Gen. William L. Nyland. “I can think of no better way to honor our Marine men and women than to capture the proud history and heritage of the Marine Corps in a museum that will forever educate visitors from around the world about the role the Marines have played throughout world history, and will continue to play in the future.”

Congress authorizes two official commemorative coins annually, and only the United States Mint may produce them. The Marine Corps 230th Anniversary Silver Dollar is the second and final commemorative coin that the United States Mint will produce in 2005. The Chief Justice John Marshall Commemorative Silver Dollar was launched earlier this year.



The front and back sides of the Marine Corps 230th Anniversary Commemorative Silver Dollar. The coin is the second and final commemorative coin to be struck for 2005. Photo courtesy of American Forces Press Service

‘Coyotes’ sniff out insurgents in Iraq

Story by Cpl. C. Alex Herron

2nd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL TAQADDUM, Iraq — Activated reserve Marines from Johnstown, Pa., along with Marines from Camp Pendleton, Calif., came together to form Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 775, Marine Aircraft Group 26, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, in 2003.

The squadron is busy in the middle of their second deployment to Iraq in two years, performing the same mission, at the same place and at the same time of year.

“This is nothing new to us. We just picked up where we left off last fall,” said Lt. Col. Karl Frost, the Coyotes executive officer. “We are in the same work spaces and everything as the last time.”

The only difference the Coyotes have experienced from their AH-1W Super Cobras and UH-1N Hueys is the reduced insurgent activity throughout Iraq.

“We have experienced a big reduction of insurgent

engagement of our aircraft and a big reduction of our troops under fire missions,” said Maj. Mark Voelker, an AH-1W Super Cobra pilot with HMLA-775.

A majority of the Coyotes tasks include casualty and medical evacuation missions where they provide security for the Army’s UH-60 Blackhawks of the 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance) and CH-46Es of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364.

“CASEVAC and MEDEVAC missions are a big part of our job, but we also respond to troops on the ground when needed and serve as convoy escorts by providing close air support to units throughout Iraq,” Frost said.

“The ground Marines really like having us around,” said Voelker, a Pittsburgh, Pa., native. “They like it because they don’t get shot at or mortared when we are around. A lot of times we get tasked with security missions that seem simple, but are a big help to our ground units because our sheer presence is enough to

deter any attacks the insurgents may attempt on our ground forces.”

One Coyote, flight line mechanic Cpl. Rick Villani, has a unique perspective on how air power can help ground units. He is a former mortarman with 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, and was deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan, for six-months. He has experienced first hand what good air support means to a ground unit.

“We had a few instances where insurgents were probing our lines, trying to see what our weaknesses were,” Villani, a Las Vegas native said. “Whenever the Cobras were in the air patrolling the surrounding areas, we always had a sense of calm over us, like we were being watched over by a big brother. We almost wanted to dare them to do something to us so they would give up their position and the Cobras could go after them.”

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES!



MCAS Miramar needs servicemembers from all ranks, occupations, experiences, backgrounds and upbringings to participate in the Guest Speaker Program. If you are interested, call the Community Relations Department at (858) 577-4333.

An appreciative audience awaits



A motorcycle lies mangled beneath a guard rail after its operator, under the influence of alcohol, lost control and crashed. A “stand down” safety brief hosted at the Bob Hope Theater on Marine Corps Air Station Miramar May 24, discussed such incidents with Marines in anticipation of the Memorial Day holiday weekend. *Photo courtesy of MCAS Miramar Safety Department*

Briefs help decrease risk of liberty incidents

Story by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marines, Sailors and civilians gathered inside the Bob Hope Theater at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar May 24, to raise their awareness of the hazards that can be encountered on liberty. The “stand down” safety brief helped renew Marines’ knowledge on the things that can go wrong during off-duty hours. “The main purpose of the safety

brief was awareness,” said Staff Sgt. Toby Hammett, safety specialist, MCAS Miramar. “Marines obviously know what is right and wrong. However, the numbers of accidents never really improve.” According to Hammett, the lack of improvement needed to change. “We’ve thought of a lot of things to do, but decided on bringing the Marines in here and putting that awareness into their heads again,” said Hammett. “We just hope it helps them.”

According to retired Navy Lt. Cmdr. Patrick F. McNamara, safety specialist, MCAS Miramar, there will be a small group of servicemembers who won’t heed the advice provided in

the brief. “They are people that live on the edge,”

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said McNamara. "They are going to live on the edge whether they are wearing a uniform or coveralls. They will do dangerous things that they consider fun."

Although the Marines who live on a dangerous edge normally do not change, the Marines who are responsible and have a chance to slip near the edge are the ones the brief focuses on.

"It reinforces to the good Marines that they have a professional responsibility to uphold," said McNamara. "They signed a contract on the dotted line to uphold the law and the Constitution. They accepted the responsibility of being a Marine and following the rules and regulations. They take that responsibility as a true profession and abide by the laws."

However, there is still a large number of Marines who take unnecessary risks.

"I spoke with a water safety instructor from Okinawa," said McNamara. "He said there are known hazardous areas off the island of Okinawa and that they continue to have fatalities simply because people do not prepare, listen, and plan. Thus you have to stay within your limits of what you know you can do."

The brief was designed to increase the Marines' situational awareness about the hazards during liberty involving activities like swimming, driving and recreational activities.

"Everybody says they care about safety, but if you never bring them in here and stop to talk about it, then it is just worries," Hammett concluded. "When you stop work, bring everyone to the theater, the chief of staff comes and the sergeant major comes, then as a Marine you know that this is serious."

Landfill provides Miramar low-cost option to refuse disposal

Story By Sgt. Kristen L. Tull

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar's Environmental Services Department invites military personnel to take advantage of the many programs it has to offer, such as free disposal of hazardous and yard waste, free mulch and the purchasing of recyclable items.

"The waste site is located on the air station, but the only access to it is from Highway 52 by taking (Interstate 15 South to Highway 52 West) and exiting on Convoy Street," said Joseph L. Corones, associate civil engineer for the City of San Diego.

It's available for anyone to use Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. until 4 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. It's closed on Christmas, New Years, Easter and Thanksgiving.

The recycling center on Miramar does not accept items such as refrigerators, mattresses and televisions, but the landfill does. Some of the larger items do have a small fee.

Lisa Wood, the senior environmentalist for the City of San Diego said, "The maximum amount you would pay for something such as a mattress is \$2.50."

The facility will purchase certain recyclable items such as aluminum cans, paper, steel, glass, all metals, electronics and cardboard.

"Right now they are paying \$1.25 per pound of aluminum cans. That can really add up and be some extra spending money just for doing the right thing," said Corones.

Household hazardous waste such as paint, motor

oil and pesticides may also be disposed of at the facility at no charge. Servicemembers can call (858) 694-7000 to make an appointment.

"They will accept you without an appointment. They just like to prevent lines in order to handle the materials more efficiently," said Wood. "They make it very easy though, you don't even have to get out of your car. They take care of everything for you."

Landscaping materials, such as mulch and compost that the facility produces, are available free for those that load it themselves, and for sale in bagged form at the recycling center located at the entrance to the landfill.

"We can even make burgundy and gold wood chips for landscaping on base," said Wood. "A lot of the compost is made with food waste from the chow hall, so it is very good for promoting plant growth."

Using this facility not only saves servicemembers money but it assists with protecting the environment - promoting the military's commitment to waste reduction.

"The military has really gone forward - way ahead of the curve - when it comes to recycling, especially with stuff like the construction and demolition debris," said Wood.

Doing the right thing for the environment provides an intangible benefit that a lot of people don't realize.

"If you stop and think about where all of this stuff comes from, we are just wasting our natural resources when we don't recycle," said Corones. "It takes much less energy to recycle it than to generate it from scratch."

HEROES

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world," Bush added. "Across the globe, our military is standing directly between our people and the worst dangers in the world — and Americans are grateful to have such brave defenders."

In introducing the president, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said that today, as in the past, Americans who have fallen in battle were "lost in a struggle dedicated to the eternal truth of freedom and the human spirit."

"Our country," he said, "was founded on that spirit, and Americans have nurtured it through every war in every era."

Indeed, Rumsfeld said, the current war on terror is being waged for the same essential purpose as the Civil War, World Wars I and II, and Cold War. President Bush, "like his predecessor (Abraham Lincoln) understood that we had to fight for freedom to save it — and that liberty's survival here depends on its advance abroad," Rumsfeld said.

Bush, like Lincoln, has "offered the hope of a new birth of freedom, not just for our nation, but for all who seek freedom," the secretary added.

Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, the former joint chiefs chairman, also said that the current war on terrorism has historical precedent. He noted that this month marked "the 60th anniversary of the allied victory in Europe."

America's World War II generation has become known as "The Greatest Generation." But, Myers said, the cur-

rent conflict is showing there is a new "Greatest Generation." This new Greatest Generation, he said, is going "bravely into harm's way, resolved to continue this difficult fight for as long as it takes."

"They know that failure is not an option," he said.

Myers paraphrased comments by President Truman, noting "victory on the battlefield is but a step on the road to peace." Truman, he observed, said that peace can be achieved "only by hard, toilsome, painstaking work."

American troops today "perform that same painstaking work" in places like Kandahar, Afghanistan; Kirkuk, Iraq; and Kosovo, a province of Serbia and Montenegro plagued by ethnic violence, Myers said. "Our service men and women understand very well that we still have much more work to do," he added. "Because just as peace cannot be brought cheaply, it cannot be won quickly."

Today's Memorial Day commemoration took place at Arlington National Cemetery's Memorial Amphitheater. The weather was warm and sunny, and the amphitheater completely filled with an eager and appreciative audience.

Just before he arrived at the amphitheater, Bush laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. "I'm honored to do that this morning on behalf of the American people," he said. "The names of the men buried there are known only to God, but their courage and sacrifice will never be forgotten by our nation."

Miramar honors fallen pilots with memorial

Story by Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Muffled sobs filled the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar chapel during a memorial service May 26 as mourners listened to a poem that Lt. Col. John C. Spahr's daughter wrote about her father.

"I'll try to be strong, but sometimes I will cry. But they are tears of joy that stream through my eye. For the great memories we shared will stay in my head. For you are a hero who led. Semper Fi Daddy, Chandler."

The memorial was held at the air station chapel in memory of two Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323 pilots, Spahr and Capt. Kelly Hinz, who died in an aircraft mishap May 2 while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

During the hour-long observance, the overflowing chapel of grievors prayed, sang songs of worship and listened to eulogies for the two pilots.

After the heartfelt speeches and benediction, the ceremony was taken outside as four F/A-18 Hornets flew over the chapel. One of the jets veered off to the right, signifying the squadron's loss of the pilots.

"They were both great guys," said Sabrina S. Lawrence, Spahr's sister. "These were guys you could never forget. They were true American

heroes."

Spahr's family was impressed by the amount of people who came to honor their beloved "Dukes," who received his call sign from mimicking John Wayne.

"It's inspiring how many people came to the memorial and know of him," said Brian Harrington, Spahr's brother-in-law. "Marines really take care of their own and do things right."

According to Harrington and Spahr's brother Steven, the seasoned pilot impacted a lot of the attendees during his lifetime.

"As a child, John was always the team captain during kickball, and he'd always help out the guy who was picked last," said Steven Spahr, holding back tears. "Many Marines have also told me that he was the type of guy who found something positive in everyone. He was just looking out for everybody all of the time."

Hinz's friends and fellow Marines remember the pilot as family oriented and good humored.

"He always had this mischievous look in his eye," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Woods, executive officer, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. "When we were flying you could turn up the intercom and hear him yelling, 'I'm going to get you!' or 'you're going down!' He was a go-getter and he really did have the fire to fly and fight."

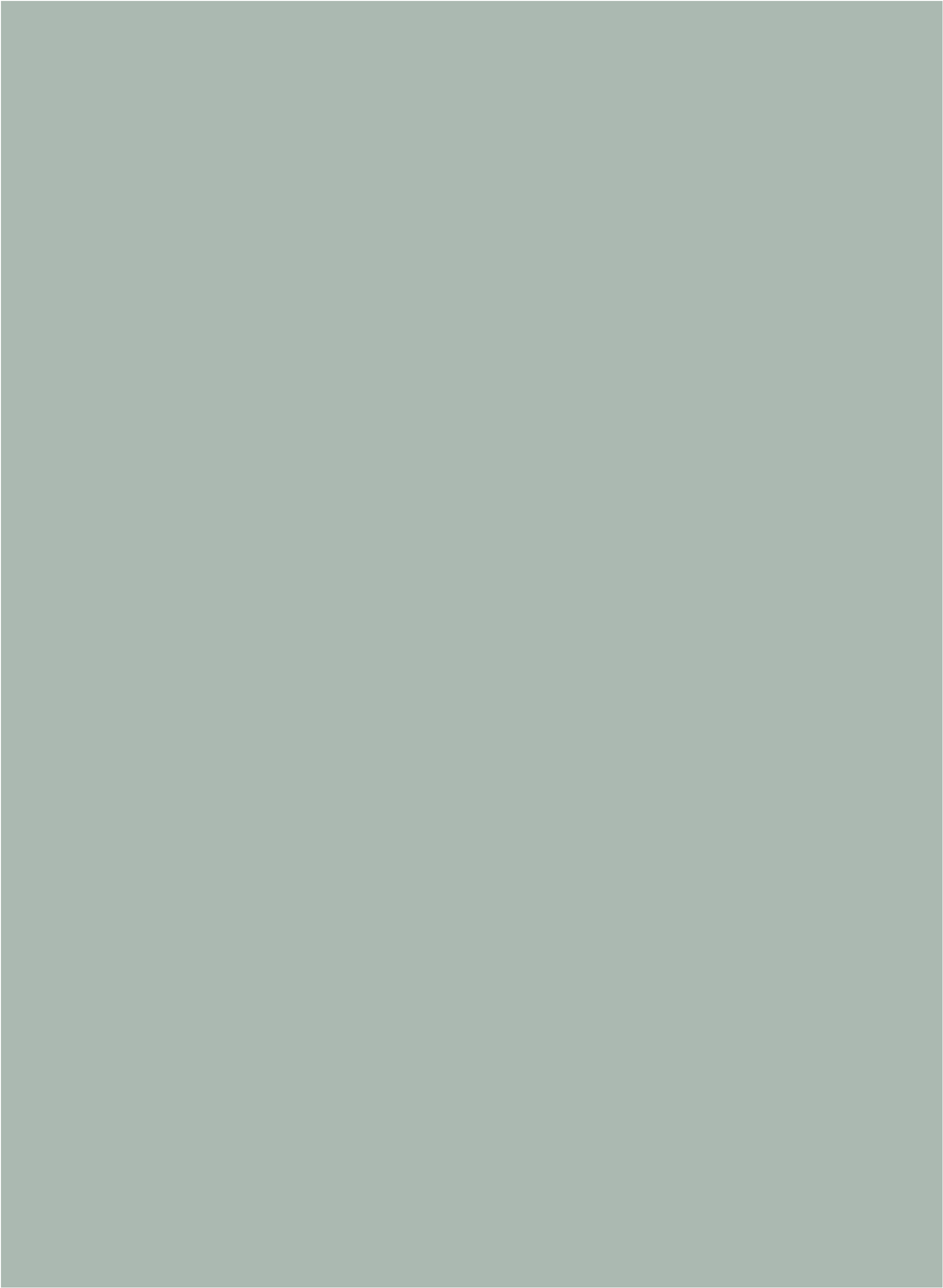
When Hinz wasn't flying, he was spending time with his wife and eight-month old daughter, Abby.

"He always put his family first," said Woods. "He loved his wife and daughter Abby, the light of his life. You could tell that his family was a huge priority."

Spahr is survived by his mother Eileen Spahr and daughter Chandler M. Spahr. Hinz is survived by his wife Molly Hinz and daughter Abby.



Two of Lt. Col. John C. Spahr's sisters, Sabrina S. Lawrence (left) and Tracy S. Harrington (far right) and his nieces Kelly and Grace stand outside a memorial service May 26 in honor of Spahr and Capt. Kelly C. Hinz. Both pilots died in an aircraft mishap May 2 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. *Photo by Cpl. Skye Jones*





Marines with Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, tumble a seven-ton truck tire at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar May 20 during a field meet against MAG-11, 3rd MAW. The field meet offered Marines from both groups an early release from their normal duties to compete in sports and military challenges. *Photo by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke*

MAGs battle it out at field meet

Story by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

In the hot afternoon sun of Southern California, members from Marine Aircraft Groups 11 and 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, participated in several sporting events and a variety of military challenges May 20 at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

The two groups competed in a traditional field meet that had them competing against each other in everything from horseshoes to a seven-ton truck pull.

"We are two different groups that work in the same building," said Lance Cpl. Vicky L. Perez, operations clerk, MAG-11, 3rd MAW. "This is the first time we've done something like this, and both of us support a little friendly competition."

According to Lance Cpl. Joseph Harris, defense specialist, Nuclear, Biological, Chemical section, MAG-11, participating in the event provided fun as well as physical training.

"Being able to participate in an activity like this gives me great pride in being a Marine," said Harris. "Physical fitness is what the Marine Corps is all about, and competition is a huge part of what we are."

However, the groups didn't just decide to go out and hold a competition - the tension that led to the

challenge built up over a period of time before the MAG-11 Headquarters Squadron commander issued a challenge to MAG-16.

"I had been doing unit (physical training) every month," said Lt. Col. Philippe D. Rogers, commanding officer, Headquarters Squadron, MAG-11. "We've always had this accumulative competition building up inside and finally I said, 'OK guys, let's take on MAG-16.'"

According to Rogers, MAG-11 planned to take the field meet the traditional direction into military activities, but MAG-16 wanted sporting events.

"We kind of had to meet them halfway, because at first we wanted to do all the traditional Marine Corps things - land navigation, Marine Corps knowledge," said the Alexandria, Va., native. "They wanted to do all of the sports, and we finally said OK and set it up."

The fact that Marines were released a few hours early from work to participate in this field meet was something that helped maximize participation.

"Everyone has their normal jobs and a lot of those Marines have been deploying a lot as of late," said Maj. Brian S. Gilden, commanding officer, Headquarters Squadron, MAG-16. "It is nice to get off work early and do



Marines with Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, pull a seven-ton truck at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar May 20 during a field meet against MAG-11, 3rd MAW. The field meet was conducted to motivate the Marines and give them an afternoon of fun after a hard week of work. *Photo by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke*

something just outside of the norm."

Although MAG-16 managed to seize victory, MAG-11 leadership was able to provide a deeper perspective of the event.

"While watching the Marines compete and challenge each other, I

didn't care who won. The purpose was different," Rogers concluded. "Marines don't remember working in their offices everyday. These are the days that Marines will remember for the rest of their lives. Look around you, they love it."

Marines test fire robotic gun

Story by Lance Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr.

2nd Marine Division

FALLUJAH, Iraq — The M240G medium machine gun sent a hail of bullets downrange, leaving accurate groups as it adjusted between three different targets, and behind the weapon...there was no gunner.

Corporal Ian A. Barr and fellow Marines with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, Regimental Combat Team-8, 2nd Marine Division, field-tested the Telepresent Rapid Aiming Platform on ranges aboard Camp Mercury, May 20.

The TRAP system is a remote controlled aiming platform that allows Marines to fire the M240G machine gun or M80A2 Special Application Scope Rifle from up to 100 meters away.

“The TRAP system is designed to keep Marines further from harms way, while still being able to fully deploy a weapon,” said Barr, a 22-year-old machine-gunner for the regimental personal security detachment and TRAP instructor.

The system is operated by a remote hand device connected to the platform by a 20 to 100-meter long cable, allowing the gunner to operate the weapon from a covered and concealed position.

The platform allows a 360-degree horizontal range of motion and 70 degrees of elevation for maximum employment of the weapon, according to the Pittsburgh, Pa. native.

The weapon is aimed through an optic display provided by a bore-sighted aiming camera mounted alongside the weapon on the platform. The system is also equipped with a wide-angle search camera with 40X zoom, thermal imaging and night vision capabilities.



An M240G medium machine gun sits on top of a Telepresent Rapid Aiming Platform during a field test held aboard Camp Mercury, Iraq, May 20. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr.*

Despite the many features and capabilities of the platform, Marines of the battalion met no difficulty employing the weapon.

“The system is easy to operate,” said Lance Cpl. Diego A. Morelli, a 22-year-old mortarman with Weapons Company, 3/4. “It’s just like playing a video game.”

While being manipulated by the TRAP system, the weapon involved maintains the same range, rate of fire and accuracy as it would if employed normally.

Once a Marine becomes comfortable with the system, its use should be equally, if not more, effective than a weapon

wielded from a Marine’s shoulder, according to Barr.

After being operated by multiple members of the battalion’s Weapons Company, the platform was approved for use by the unit.

The battalion intends to employ the TRAP in upcoming operations in the near future, according to Chief Warrant Officer 2 John D. Whiting, the battalion’s gunner and a native of Yucca Valley, Calif.

“In the defense, an automatic weapon is a primary target,” Whiting said. “The Marines will still be manning the post, but this makes them a harder target.”

Sergeant major represents Marine Corps at Arlington

Story by Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Sitting at a desk surrounded by drill instructor memorabilia, dusty 20-year-old Marine Corps training handbooks, a copy of “Rifleman Dodd” and the latest issue of Marines Magazine, a woman with short brown hair and dark skin finishes the last few bites of her afternoon meal before rushing off for an interview during her lunch break.

Years ago, the upbeat and proud sergeant major would have never imagined herself in such a hectic position. In the present however, Sgt. Maj. Ramona Cook, sergeant major, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, is leading Marines and representing the Marine Corps at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery.

The Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues honored Cook, a Los Angeles native, May 26 at the memorial during the eighth annual Women in the Military Wreath Laying Ceremony.

The caucus recognized one senior female noncommissioned officer from each of the five branches of the U.S. military to pay tribute to their service, courage and sacrifice.

“I’m excited, but everybody else is doing the work,” said a modest Cook, relaxing in her chair before the trip. “I really appreciate the honor, though.”

Cook’s Marines do all of the boasting for her.

“They couldn’t have picked anyone else to better represent the Marines,” said Staff Sgt. Trylonda E. Keller, operations chief, HMH-462, shaking her head in approval. “I’m happy that she was chosen. Women are still out there, especially the senior enlisted. You don’t run into female sergeants major too often and she’s definitely holding her own.”

Keller was a recruit when Cook was the series gunnery sergeant at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., in 1996.

“After I graduated, I worked at recruit clothing and I always saw her walking around,” recalled Keller. “I was still in shock, because I just got out of boot camp, but she still (instilled) fear.”

Cook reported to drill instructor school during April 1995. After completing school, Cook be-



Sergeant Major Ramona Cook, sergeant major, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, smiles in front of a “hat box” that her recruits made when she was a senior drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. Cook soon became the first company first sergeant of Company P, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment. Cook represented the Marine Corps May 26 at the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues’ Women in Military Service for America Memorial. Photo by Cpl. Skye Jones

“You can still be a woman and a Marine and have a successful career.”

***Sgt. Maj. Ramona Cook
sergeant major, HMH-462, MAG-16, 3rd MAW***

came a drill instructor, senior drill instructor, series gunnery sergeant and eventually, the company first sergeant of Company P, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment.

“I picked up gunny a month before DI school and everybody said, ‘don’t do it, don’t do it, you’re already a gunny!’ I didn’t care, I just thought it would be awesome to mold females,” laughed Cook. “You can do anything you put your mind to. The doors are open. Take no shortcuts.”

The strong-willed sergeant major signed up for the Marine Corps because she wanted to be in the toughest branch. She joined with her best friend in 1982, with the mentality of, “if anybody can do it, I can.”

During Cook’s first years as a Marine, the requirements for females were much different than the males. According to Cook, for the female physical fitness test, women ran 1.5 miles, compared to the three miles males ran, completed 50 sit-ups in one minute and did the flexed-arm hang. Females were also not required to qualify on the rifle range.

“If you completed the one and a half miles in

10 minutes or less, you earned the top score for the run. Females were also given expert rifle scores, because we didn’t have to shoot. This made a lot of the male Marines angry,” explained Cook. “Now, we’re all doing the same thing. I’m glad the system finally caught up.”

Cook’s Marines don’t look at her as a female. They see her as a Marine.

“She’s the best sergeant major that I’ve ever had in my 12 years in the Marine Corps,” said Staff Sgt. Jason Cohen, air frames division chief, HMH-462. “It doesn’t matter if she’s a female or not. She’s a sergeant major.”

Cook completely agrees with Cohen’s sentiments.

“There are so few of us (females) in the Marines and it only takes a couple of bad apples for all of us to be labeled. You’re a Marine, not a female. We need to strive to be the best,” said a passionate Cook. “But, you don’t have to give up that part of your identity. You can still be a woman and a Marine and have a successful career.

“I still can’t believe it,” smiled Cook. “I remember being so proud as a (private first class). I flew home in my uniform and wore it on leave whenever I had the chance. Never in a million years would I have thought of myself coming this far.”

Miramar Movies

The Station Auditorium is located in Building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies. Admission price for movies is \$1. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, contact 577-4143 or log on to www.mccsmiramar.com.

Friday:
6:30 p.m. The Amityville Horror (R)
9:00 p.m. The Interpreter (PG-13)

Saturday:
6:30 p.m. A Lot Like Love (PG-13)
9:00 p.m. Sahara (PG-13)

Sunday:
1:00 p.m. Fever Pitch (PG-13)
6:30 p.m. Sin City (R)

Wednesday:
6:30 p.m. The Interpreter (PG-13)

Thursday:
2:00 p.m. Matinee cancelled, military functions
6:30 p.m. A Lot Like Love (PG-13)

Military appreciation day

Navy Federal Credit Union presents Military Appreciation Day, Thursday, in the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Bowling Center parking lot. Enjoy free, food music and giveaways from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The military appreciation day event features Victoria Robertson Band and other musical entertainment for the entire family. For more information, call (858) 577-6365 or visit <http://www.mccsmiramar.com>.

Religious Services

The Chaplain’s Office is located in Building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain’s Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist

Wednesday:
7 p.m. Baptist service

Monday-Friday:
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass

Jewish:
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

RAs needed Corps-wide

Recruiters assistants are needed throughout the Corps. Any Marine accepted for RA will receive 30 days permissive temporary additional duty and a possible 100 points toward promotion. Marines interested should contact their hometown recruiter for more information.

Free race paces

There are a limited number of free race entry passes for the 2005 Rock ‘n’ Roll Marathon scheduled to take place Sunday. These are the only free vouchers that remain for the race. For more information, please call (858) 577-7700 or visit <http://www.mccsmiramar.com>.

Reporter to sign books

Wall Street Journal staff reporter Michael Phillips, who was imbedded with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines Regiment, during Operation Iraqi Freedom will be autographing his book, “The Gift of Valor: A War Story” at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Exchange June 10, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

L.I.N.K.S sessions

Lifestyles, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills will be hosting a session at the Murphy Canyon Chapel, June 7 and 8 from 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. both days. Come learn helpful information about military lifestyle and interact with other spouses. For more information, call (858) 577-4810.

Impounded Vehicles

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information contact the Provost Marshal’s Office at 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:	Vehicle:	License:
1989 Chevy Z24	CA/4TVY631	1994 Cadillac SLS	CA/3JFL323
2000 Ford Focus	CA/4JMZ536	1995 Nissan Sentra	CA/SZE4762
Mazda MX-6	FL/JPOJGS	1995 Mits. Eclipse	KY/907KKR
1987 Toyota Camry	CA/5CJZ685	1984 Linc. Limo	CA/3MGV444
Chrysler Shadow	MN/FPR718	1989 Ford Taurus	TX/T40PRC
1989 Toyota Camry	CA/4VI588Z	Unk. Trailer	CA/1VW1350

